April 1st is a day most seniors await with bated breath: it is the day that could decide their futures. Colleges historically send those letters that can either raise a spirit to new heights or hurl it down into the abyss. For some, their future hangs in the balance on this day.

But if you think about it, there’s something else significant about April 1st. Doesn’t it seem kind of sinister that colleges send out their acceptance letters on April Fool’s Day? It certainly did to me.

Can you imagine grabbing your mail, opening it up, and finding an acceptance letter from Yale? You call up all your friends, rejoice to your parents, and reformat your plans to let Yale in, and then you find a second sheet in the envelope: one that just says “April Fool’s!”

Unfortunately, there are many who can. Every April 1st students around the world find themselves receiving letters from their dream colleges, only to find that their hopes and dreams forever crushed a few minutes later.

This practice started several years ago when several prominent colleges realized that their admission processes could inflict even deeper psychological damage if they sent out fake acceptance letters.

“We felt that we weren’t doing enough emotional damage to our rejected candidates, so we stepped things up a bit,” said college admissions director Prali Solof in an interview. “The new fake acceptance letters are doing a great job.”

The practice has proven so popular that other, less competitive colleges are taking it up. “They [the other colleges] feel like they should instill the same feeling of soul-crushing despair as we do,” said Solof.

The joke letters are composed and distributed by the newly christened Department of False Admissions and Mismanagement. Other colleges are taking cue from this and setting up their own Fake Admissions departments.

It was suggested last year that rejection letters be sent to the people who actually got in to various colleges, but the petition was dismissed as excessively demoralizing. “It could have gotten to the point where nobody was in our college except the people we didn’t want. Just breaking the spirit of innocent students is good enough for us.” Solof said.

So this year when you open your college acceptance letters take everything with a grain of salt. You never know when you might discover a second note in your envelope.